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ALDOUS HUXLEY

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Point Counter Point

By ALDOUS HUXLEY

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* *Not yet available in this Collected Edition*

ALDOUS HUXLEY
Point Counter Point
A Novel



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*Oh, wearisome condition of humanity,
Born under one law, to another bound,
Vainly begot and yet forbidden vanity,
Created sick, commanded to be sound.
What meaneth nature by these diverse laws,
Passion and reason, self-division's cause?*

FULKE GREVILLE

POINT COUNTER POINT

CHAPTER I

‘You won’t be late?’ There was anxiety in Marjorie Carling’s voice, there was something like entreaty.

‘No, I won’t be late,’ said Walter, unhappily and guiltily certain that he would be. Her voice annoyed him. It drawled a little, it was too refined—even in misery.

‘Not later than midnight.’ She might have reminded him of the time when he never went out in the evenings without her. She might have done so ; but she wouldn’t ; it was against her principles ; she didn’t want to force his love in any way.

‘Well, call it one. You know what these parties are.’ But as a matter of fact, she didn’t know, for the good reason that, not being his wife, she wasn’t invited to them. She had left her husband to live with Walter Bidlake ; and Carling, who had Christian scruples, was feebly a sadist and wanted to take his revenge, refused to divorce her. It was two years now since they had begun to live together. Only two years ; and now, already, he had ceased to love her, he had begun to love someone else. The sin was losing its only excuse, the social discomfort its sole palliation. And she was with child.

‘Half-past twelve,’ she implored, though she knew that her importunity would only annoy him, only make him love her the less. But she could not prevent herself from speaking ; she loved him too much, she was too agonizingly jealous. The words broke out in spite of her principles. It would have been better for her, and perhaps for Walter too, if she had had fewer prin-